August 1964

The Death of Rev. Gerald Kelly, S.J.

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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Late in the morning of Sunday, August 2, at St. Joseph's Hospital, Kansas City, Father Gerald Kelly, S.J., went finally and most cheerfully to his eternal reward. That his heavenly recompense will be exceedingly great is, according to human reckoning, a foregone conclusion.

For those whose privilege it was to know Father Kelly, no eulogy is necessary; for those who were denied that blessing, no eulogy could possibly suffice. Unquestionably was he outstanding as a man among men, a priest among priests, a theologian among theologians. Christian humanist, the Catholic priesthood, and moral theology suffered an immeasurable loss in his untimely but not unexpected death.

Eleven years ago, at the age of only fifty, Father Kelly suffered the first of what eventually were to number some half-dozen corruptions. Since that day and despite that handicap, he wrote four books and articles almost too numerous to count except for relatively brief periods of illness, he continued to teach his usual classes; and when he could, he accepted extracurricular lecture assignments from coast to coast; with solicitude, charity he functioned as fraternal advisor to younger generations of theologians who sought his advice on matters moral and ascetical; with infinite patience and generosity he answered faithfully the hundreds of letters which poured across his desk. In terms of unflagging energy and productivity, even a severely handicapped Father Kelly was the envy and inspiration of those who knew him best.

Especially indebted to Father Kelly are Catholic physicians throughout this country and abroad, Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Hospitals, a model of theological preciseness, was the work principally of his genius; Medico-Moral Problems, a detailed commentary on the Directives, is unsurpassed in the estimation of both knowledgeable doctors and professional theologians; for ten years and more, scarcely an issue of The Linacre Quarterly appeared without a substantial contribution under his name; his B.L.S. at St. Mary's College literally bulge with a lifetime's correspondence with physicians all over the world. Because he talked the language of doctors with medical and theological exactitude, he was in large extent personally responsible for the mutual understanding and respect which has long existed between Catholic physicians and moral theologians in this country.

We have loved him during life; let us not abandon him until we have conducted him by our prayers into the house of the Lord.

St. Ambrose
John J. Lynch, S.J.

The Moderator's Message...

The Federation—A Religious Perspective

It is a pleasure to assume the office of Moderator of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds. No small part of that pleasure is derived from a personal knowledge and appreciation of the competence, the apostolic urge of those who guide the affairs of this organization. In the formation of this spirit many Guilds have played an active part; by this spirit many Guilds have been moved to a fuller Christian apostolate.

For the Federation this is a period of maturing as well as of continued growth, of implementing policies long established as well as of acquiring the broader Christian vision demanded by a changing national and world society. The Federation is more than an instrument of union for its constituent Guilds; it must be the instrument for the fuller sharing of the Christian life, an instrument for the expression, discussion, and implementation of the thoughts, the plans, the discoveries of Catholic doctors throughout the United States.

One still hears the occasional comment of a Catholic doctor that the Guild concept is divisive. It is not divisive in the sense that the Guild would seek to separate a Catholic doctor from the other members of his profession in particular, or from the community in general. But it is a divisive concept which seeks to bring the man of medicine to a fuller activation of his role as a man of God. How else account for the "divisiveness" of being baptized, of being identified as "the people of God," of being called by God to the primary vocation of worship. Properly motivated, then, the Guild can be one more means for the fulfillment of a responsibility that weighs heavy upon us all—to be witnesses for Christ.

The unique individuality of the spiritual person was conferred by God through the special communication of His life of grace. And just as God's individuality is not destroyed by His all-embracing concern for mankind, neither will a similar concern and identity with the community destroy, but rather enhance, the distinctive personality of the Christian. To the adequate implementation of this God-given role, already so well exemplified in the diversified plans and works of so many Guilds, the Federation dedicates and pledges its best efforts. Surely we are typified by the words of the Psalmist: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'

REVEREND KENNETH P. MACKINNON

AUGUST, 1964